

Surface Transportation Authorization Bill Signed Into Law



On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed into law the *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act*, or MAP-21 surface transportation authorization bill. This bill comes after nearly three years of program extensions following SAFETEA-LU's expiration in September 2009 and is the result of a strong push by Congress to give the nation's transportation industry stable funding.

Much of the credit for this bill goes to Montana's delegation and their staffs.

MAP-21 provides funding for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2012 under the SAFETEA-LU program structure and implements a new structure for FY 2013 and FY 2014. Montana's 2013 apportionment level is the same as FY 2012, while FY 2014 receives a slight program increase. Actual spendable dollars or obligation authority established through the annual appropriation process has traditionally been less than apportionment, meaning a reduction in spendable dollars for Montana under MAP-21. Although this will result in a reduction in spendable dollars, this program level is a significant achievement for Montana, as other authorization bills proposed over the past three years would have reduced Montana's funding by as much as \$59 million annually.

In addition to the funding, the big news about MAP-21 is program consolidation and new system performance and asset management requirements. Federal guidance on nearly all of these changes is pending, so states are unable to provide hard direction on the implementation of the new provisions at this time.

In general terms concerning program consolidation, most program eligibilities remain, but the program structure will look considerably different than in recent years. The most notable consolidations include grouping the Interstate, National Highway System, and National Highway Bridges into a new National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), rolling non-National Highway System and off-system bridges into the Surface Transportation Program, and replacing the standalone Transportation Enhancement, Safe Routes to School, and Recreational Trails programs with a new encompassing Transportation Alternatives program. Though one of the shortest sections of the bill, this new Transportation Alternatives program will likely be the center of considerable discussion as it requires that at least a portion of funds be distributed based on population and a competitive process, which is a change from past practice in Montana.

The nature of the asset management and performance goals is also yet to be determined. The bill requires that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), with input from the states, develop performance measures for seven national goal areas including safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement and economic viability, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delivery delays. In addition to these national measures, the new NHPP also sets a performance requirement for bridge condition on National Highway System routes.

MAP-21 also provides for changes within Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding and programs. Program consolidation, asset management, and performance goals are also part of the new FTA programs structure. Additionally, MAP-21 will increase funding for Montana transit programs. A new bus and bus facilities formula grant will ensure dedicated funding for capital projects in Montana. The Tribal Transit program has been changed from a discretionary grant program to a formula grant program that will guarantee funding for tribal transit programs applying for transit funding.

The National Highway Traffic Safety (NHTSA) programs will also see changes stemming from MAP-21, with consolidation of programs funded by NHTSA. The core NHTSA program known as Section 402 will remain generally the same as SAFETEA-LU, while a number of other programs will be rolled into one program known as Section 405. NHTSA will continue to require certain traffic safety projects for the states to be eligible for funding, and MAP-21 strengthens requirements for states to work with strategic highway safety plans such as Montana's Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan. Under MAP-21, Highway Safety plans will be due to NHTSA by July 1st instead of September 1st of each year. Consistent with the programs under SAFETEA-LU, NHTSA distracted driver funds and funds associated with graduated driver licensing will not be available as Montana current laws in these areas do not meet NHTSA criteria for funding.

MDT plans to participate in the FHWA, NHTSA, and FTA rule-making processes to protect our programs and ensure rural perspectives are considered. To further our efforts in these processes, MDT is requesting comments from interested parties through our MAP-21 website, which can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/announcement-map21.shtml>.

This website also has links to FTA and FHWA's MAP-21 sites, which includes the MAP-21 document, funding tables, and frequently asked questions. Be sure to check back occasionally as we will continue to update our webpage as additional information becomes available.

Christopher Dorrington Hired as Data & Statistics Bureau Chief



Christopher Dorrington

Christopher Dorrington was named the Data & Statistics Bureau Chief for the Rail, Transit & Planning Division. He will oversee two sections – Traffic Data Collection & Analysis and Road Inventory & Mapping.

Most recently Chris supervised the Rail, Air Quality, and Studies Section, where he was responsible for state and federal discretionary funds, emerging research, public involvement, rest area planning, and rail programs. Prior to this assignment, Chris spent four years supervising the Planning Systems Section in the Data & Statistics Bureau, where he was responsible for state and federal data collection, management, and reporting.

Chris' greatest passions include his family, sports, and outdoor recreation. A native Montanan, Chris grew up in Helena and attended the Gonzaga University School of Engineering, from which he holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. In 2010, Chris graduated at the top of his class from the George Mason School of Public Policy with a master's degree in Transportation Policy, Operations and Logistics.

Audrey Allums Selected as Grants Bureau Chief



Audrey Allums

Audrey Allums has been selected to serve as the Planning Division Grants Bureau Chief. She will oversee two sections, State Highway Traffic Safety and the Transit section.

She has been with MDT for eight years, serving as the Transit Section Supervisor for the last six years. Previously, Audrey spent 13 years working for various agencies in Montana state government overseeing other federally funded grant programs.

She grew up on a farm near Flandreau, South Dakota, and attended the University of South Dakota and Chadron State College in Nebraska. Audrey received her MA from George Mason University's School of Transportation, Policy, Operations, and Logistics. In 2009, Audrey and her MDT transit team received the Governor's Award for Excellence for their work in expanding public transportation across Montana.

In her free time, Audrey travels with her husband, Richard, and enjoys the great Montana outdoors.

New Two Medicine Bridge Set to Open This Fall

After two years of work, the new Two Medicine River Bridge, one of the most complex projects ever for MDT, is set to open to traffic this fall. Construction began in September 2010.

The new bridge will include 12-foot-wide traffic lanes, 8-foot-wide shoulders plus a 6-foot-wide lane for bicycles and pedestrians. In total, the new bridge will be 22 feet wider than the existing bridge and will stand 45 feet higher. It is 1,525-feet long.

The bridge it replaces was built 70 years ago and is considered functionally obsolete, due in part to its narrow width of 24-feet and lack of shoulders, which amounts to barely enough room for two semi-trucks to pass.

The Two Medicine River Bridge is an important connector between Havre and Kalispell along US Highway 2. If the bridge were to close, the detour for this corridor would be an additional 370 miles, re-routed through either Lincoln in the south or Lethbridge, Canada, in the north.

Once the new bridge is open to traffic, work will begin to remove the old Two Medicine River Bridge that stands a few hundred feet away.

To see more photos go to <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/webcams/twomed.shtml>.



Transit Tales

Transit Providers Receive Discretionary Grants

Several transit providers across Montana have been awarded federal discretionary grants. The grants vary from capital projects to software and will benefit Montanans across the state.

State of Good Repair:

Butte Transit will receive \$840,000 to purchase buses to serve the community's fixed route. Butte Silver Bow Transit will replace buses in its fleet that have met or exceeded their useful life. The new buses will result in decreased maintenance costs and improved energy efficiency. The fixed route service in Butte provides 171,688 rides per year and is a lifeline for many residents needing transportation.

Bus Livability:

Billings MET Transit will receive \$38,112 for customer-focused Information Technology Systems (ITS) software. This software provides real-time information on the vehicle's location, which allows for better management of the asset and shares its location. The Billings Transit System will purchase new software to allow passengers to get real-time arrival and departure information and will replace on-board computers with tablets.

Kalispell Eagle Transit will receive \$74,090 for an ITS upgrade. Eagle Transit will implement customer-focused software improvements, such as voice response schedule information, fixed route information published via Google transit, and online para-transit reservations.

Public Lands Highway Discretionary Program:

Crow Agency and Fort Smith transit system will receive \$2,267,469 for a project to design and build a maintenance facility and transit terminal. The new facilities will help keep the transit fleet in a state of good repair, enhance the community, and increase access to employment.

The Fort Belknap transit system will receive \$416,171. This project will offset energy costs for a transit facility by installing a wind turbine.

Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative:

Great Falls Transit and the Montana Transit Association will receive \$380,500 to develop a web-based program allowing transportation agencies and human service organizations across the state to share ride schedules, coordinate services, and make it easier for the more than 110,000 veterans who live in Montana to access information that will help them get to work, medical appointments, and other destinations.

Congratulations to all those receiving discretionary grant awards.

Montana's Safe Routes to School Program Funding Awarded

MDT has awarded over \$750,000 to 30 Montana communities for needed infrastructure improvements and to promote safe walking and biking to school for students in grades K-8.

Montana SRTS will also contract with the non-profit organization, Journeys From Home (Stevensville) to provide curriculum supplements and continue training elementary and middle school physical education teachers in techniques that directly develop safe pedestrian and bicycling skills.

The following schools/towns are participating for the first time in Montana's SRTS:

- Roundup
- Glendive
- Brockton/Fort Peck
- Manhattan
- Whitehall
- Rocky Boy/Box Elder
- Lakeside

Applications for the SRTS School funding year beginning

July 1, 2013 are due December 31, 2012. Limited amounts are available. For an application and contact information, go to <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/>.



International Walk and Bike to School Days



International Walk to School Day is October 3, and the International Bike to School day is May 8, 2013. Go to <http://www.walkbiketoschool.org> to find out more about these programs.

Correction

The June 2012 Newsline article *Montana Earns Four Transit Awards* mentioned Streamline receiving the best bus wrap award. It was actually Skyline from the Big Sky Transportation District pictured below that received the best bus wrap. We apologize for this error and extend our congratulations to Skyline.



Skyline in Bozeman received an award for the best bus wrap.

Constructing for Wildlife Connectivity and Highway Safety

Why does wildlife cross the road? The answer is easy: to get to the other side! However, this simple answer generates a multitude of more complex questions:

- Why is the animal crossing at this particular spot?
- Where is the animal going and why?
- Is this crossing to satisfy the requirement for food, shelter, breeding, dispersal, etc.?
- Is this a daily, seasonal or once-in-a-lifetime crossing?



1) Daily travel to access forage, water, and shelter 2) seasonal and regional movements to summer and winter ranges, and 3) linkage corridors to adjacent mountain ranges. Location is south of Butte along I-15 (looking south). I-15 splits the Pioneer Mountains on the right and Highland Mountains on the left.

Finding the answers to these questions is the first step to understanding the need to design habitat connectivity into highway construction projects. Habitat connectivity is an emerging science that estimates the level at which the landscape allows for wildlife movement between habitats. Increasing the level of habitat connectivity is a process of creating barrier-free travel ways to maintain connectivity between critical habitat patches that permit wildlife to move over larger areas and allow for more sustainable populations and increased species/population diversity and survivability.

Animal-vehicle collisions are a concern in Montana. Safety of motorists along with wildlife connectivity are issues MDT takes seriously. Habitat connectivity is a critical part of the highway planning and design process, focusing on alleviating impacts to population isolation, reduced access to habitats, and habitat fragmentation.

Wildlife movement means survival for many species as animals need to move from one place to another for food, water, safety, and to avoid adverse seasonal conditions. Impacts to wildlife and the continuing need to build wider highways to compensate for higher traffic volumes has brought habitat connectivity issues to the forefront nationwide. MDT biologists develop habitat connectivity measures that are incorporated into construction projects. A wide range of measures are studied, including a mix of underpasses, overpasses, at-grade crossings, bridge extensions, culvert installations and modifications, fencing (which helps direct wildlife movement), and the removal of existing barriers. Placement of these connectivity features is critical in maintaining traditional movement patterns of wildlife and improving highway safety. Incorrect placement can create new issues for wildlife by leading them into unforeseen barriers

beyond the highway, into unfamiliar territories outside of their home range, into unproductive habitat, or into areas where they are not wanted.

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks has developed the Critical Areas Planning System (CAPS) that can be used to assist MDT biologists in determining priority areas for maintaining connectivity to critical habitats. Models are only one tool they use to determine the placement of crossings. Biologists also incorporate the data from MDT's animal-vehicle collision database and consult with state and federal resource agencies, universities, non-governmental organizations, and consultants to gather the necessary information on wildlife movements and potential crossing locations. Of all the information available, on-site investigations and pre-construction monitoring contribute the most important details to decide the location and type of crossing necessary or whether the installation of a crossing is even possible.

Topography is a major factor in determining the appropriate crossing type. For example, high ground-water may preclude the installation of an underpass, or level topography may not be suitable for the installation of an overpass, and adjacent land uses may prevent the installation of any crossing. All these issues come into play and need to be addressed with habitat connectivity in mind. Ultimately, however, it is up to the animals to decide if they'll use the crossing. Wildlife perceive the landscape very differently than humans, making it challenging for biologists to determine effective locations and appropriate

crossings for habitat connectivity.

Habitat connectivity is a puzzle that MDT biologists are piecing together one highway project at a time, and by doing so, MDT is helping maintain connectivity between critical habitat patches allowing for more sustainable wildlife populations while increasing the safety for the traveling public. So, as you travel the state and see a "wildlife crossing structure ahead" sign, look to see if you can determine which wildlife habitats beyond the highway are being connected.



Pictures capture animal movement. Top left, black bear; top right, Evaro Overpass; lower left, turkeys; lower right, coyotes.

Driving Skills Program Coming to Montana

The Ford Driving Skills for Life program was developed by the Ford Motor Company Fund and the Governors Highway Safety Association, in an effort to share some of the most successful teen safe driving programs. This award-winning, national program is coming to Montana in October and November. Its focus is to help young drivers improve their skills in the following areas that are critical factors in more than 60 percent of teen vehicle crashes:

- Hazard Recognition/Distractions
- Vehicle Handling
- Space Management
- Speed Management

The tour kickoff is scheduled in Helena for October 13, with speakers from the Ford Driving Skills for Life program and Helena dignitaries. If time permits, the Ford Driving Skills for Life program will stop in Boulder and Townsend the week of October 8, to conduct presentations during high school assemblies and promote the opportunity for local teens to attend the Helena kickoff event.

A one day program will be held in the Kmart parking lot on Cedar Street in Helena and is open to the public. Other events are planned at high schools across Montana. The tentative schedule at the right includes visits to several Montana high schools.

All-day, hands-on training sessions for 12 students per hour are conducted at each location. The training modules include education about distracted driving, texting and driving, as well as speed and space management when driving. Pre-registration is required, and forms will be available a few days prior at each event location.

The Ford staff plans to include community partners such as local and state law enforcement, and emergency response teams at each location in support of this teen driver safety program. Also, MDT’s Respect the Cage exhibit with its roll-over simulator displaying how the use of seat belts saves lives will be at each site.

All attendees are encouraged to access an online component called *The Academy*, at www.drivingskillsforlife.com, to find out more information about the Ford Driving Skills for Life program.

Contact Pam Buckman at pbuckman@mt.gov or 444-0809, with questions.



Photo courtesy of Ford Motor Company.

TENTATIVE FORD DRIVING SKILLS FOR LIFE SCHEDULE			
Location	Date	Assembly	Hands-On
Helena @ Kmart parking lot	10/13/12		x
Boulder Jefferson High School	10/11/12	x	
High School TBD	10/12/12	x	
Missoula Big Sky High School	10/24/12		x
Missoula Big Sky/Sentinel High Schools	10/25/12	x	
Missoula Sentinel High School	10/26/12		x
Belgrade High School	10/30/12	x	
Belgrade High School	10/31/12		x
Location TBD	11/5/12	x	
Location TBD	11/6/12		x

MDT’s ADA Transition Plan Available Soon

MDT will complete the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan for MDT facilities soon. The plan identifies ADA barriers and provides guidance toward making MDT facilities accessible to all.

The Transition Plan applies to all facilities and right-of-way features owned and maintained by MDT. Examples of facilities include office buildings, rest areas, scale sites, airports, and maintenance buildings. Examples of right-of-way features include curb ramps, sidewalks, crosswalks, medians, and accessible pedestrian signals. The MDT ADA Transition Plan should be finalized by the end of September and available on this website: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/contracting/civil/ada.shtml>.

For a printed copy, contact Janet Kenny at 444-7294 or jakenny@mt.gov. Alternate accessible formats are available upon request, by contacting Alice Flesch at 444-4229. For the hearing impaired, use TTY number 444-7696 or 800-335-7592, or call the Montana Relay at 711.



Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Instructions and Tips

Three out of four child safety seats are not used correctly - *Child Passenger Safety Week, September 16-22, is a good time for a car seat check.*

Research shows that three out of four children are not as secure in their car seats as they should be because the car seats are not being used correctly. MDT urges parents and care providers to have their children's car seats checked during National Child Passenger Safety Week, September 16-22.

Many counties have local inspection stations and/or certified child passenger safety technicians who can ensure the child's car seat is being used properly. To find the nearest technician or inspection station, call 1-877-330-BUCKLE (2825) or go to <http://www.buckleup.mt.gov/children.shtml>.

In a passenger vehicle crash, car seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71 percent for children younger than one-year-old and by 54 percent for children ages one to four-years-old, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). NHTSA recently released updated car seat recommendations for children through age 12 years. The recommendations emphasize the importance of keeping children in the correct size seat and not advancing to the next step or size too soon.

Birth – 12 months

For the best possible protection, a child under one year-old should always ride in a rear-facing car seat with a harness. There are different types of rear-facing car seats. Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing. Convertible and three-in-one car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position than infant seats.

1 – 3 years

Children should remain in a rear-facing car seat until reaching the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer. This may result in many children riding rear-facing to age two or older.

4 – 7 years

Keep children in forward-facing car seats with a harness until reaching the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer.

8 – 12 years

Children should ride in a booster seat until big enough to fit a seat belt properly. For a seat belt to fit properly, the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snugly across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face.

Remember:

- Select a car seat based on the child's age and size, and choose a seat that properly fits in the vehicle. Secure the child in the car seat every trip.
- Refer to the car seat manufacturer's instructions. Read the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or LATCH system, and check height and weight limits.
- To maximize safety, keep the child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.
- Children should ride in the back seat at least through age 12.

Montana's child restraint law states that all children must be properly restrained up to age six and 60 pounds. Officers are enforcing this law to ensure Montana's most vulnerable passengers are riding safely at all times.

For more information on Child Passenger Safety Week, visit <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS>.

For live updates, follow @childseatsafety on Twitter or join the community of parents, advocates, and safety experts at <http://www.facebook.com/childpassengersafety>.

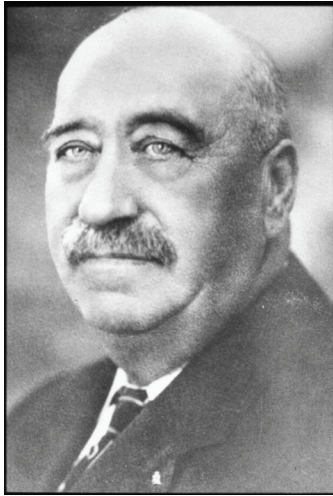


Montana CPS instructors John Spencer and Tracie Kiesel educate how to correctly secure a child in a safety seat.

Montana's Convict-Built Roads — 1913

By Jon Axline, MDT Historian

When the state legislature created the Montana Highway Commission in 1913, it allocated no funds for road-building. Instead, the commission functioned in an advisory capacity, encouraging the counties to construct roads to then modern standards. The counties, however, didn't have the same priorities as the state. During the giddy days of the Homestead Boom before World War I, the counties were



Prison Warden Frank Conley began working prisoners on road projects in 1910.

overwhelmed trying to keep up with the infrastructure needs of their new residents. County crews mostly built the fledgling state highway system. The only experienced road builders in Montana at the time were prison convicts.

Prison Warden Frank Conley began working prisoners on road projects in 1910. He was a firm believer that putting the men to work taught them not only self-respect, but also a trade they could use when released from the penitentiary. Prison labor outside the walls also relieved chronic overcrowding inside the prison at Deer Lodge.

Men chosen for the road crews consisted of non-violent offenders.

It was brutal pick-and-shovel work in remote areas that often required extensive excavation and rock work. The men used compressed air drills and explosives, but those were the only tools that eased the hard work. During off-hours, the men lived in tent camps supervised by unarmed guards. The camps were a definite step up from the dreadful conditions of the prison. The food was good, the men had access to warm showers, and they were provided with up-to-date reading material. They often entertained themselves at nightly sing-alongs and band concerts. Escape attempts were few because the alternative was a quick trip back to the prison. Those who stuck it out received good conduct credit that reduced their sentences; the recidivism rate for the road crews was low.

At its very first meeting, highway commissioners Robert Kneale and A. W. Mahon instructed George Metlen to investigate the possibility of utilizing prison labor to build roads under sponsorship of the commission. After a positive report, the commissioners directed Metlen to work out an agreement with Warden Conley. The cost of using the prisoners was divided between the counties and highway commission. The first project completed by the convict crews was the along the east shore of Flathead Lake in Flathead County.

The highway commission was a strong supporter of the use of prison crews, especially after Governor Sam Stewart appointed Conley to the commission in 1917. It purchased horse teams, picks, shovels, scrapers, and other equipment for the crews.

After World War I, Conley allocated surplus war equipment

to the convicts for road construction. Between 1913 and 1925, prison labor constructed 230 miles of roads in western Montana.

Metlen and Conley, however, recognized the limitations of prison labor. It was only cost effective on sections of road that required extensive excavations and rock removal. Convicts wouldn't be particularly useful in eastern Montana where the need for that kind of work was minimal. They also discovered that it was best to keep the men within 200 miles of Deer Lodge or transportation costs became prohibitive. The results, however, were spectacular. They constructed highways in some of the most rugged areas of the state, including west of Drummond, along the Big Hole River near Divide, and between Garrison and Avon in Powell County.

Competition between road contractors and the prison crews grew after World War I. That led to complaints by the contractors, who felt the convicts had an unfair advantage. Increasingly, during the 1920s, the highway commission used prison crews in more isolated areas doing work that would have been too expensive under contract with private firms. Consequently, the number of convict crews during the decade dwindled. The limitations of the use of that kind of labor also became more apparent to the highway commission and less cost effective to the state. The highway commission terminated the program in 1925.

So what is the legacy of the convict road builders? In addition to being the only experienced modern road builders in the state for many years, they pioneered modern road-building techniques. Examples of their work is still very much evident in Montana. Convict Grade east of Livingston, the old road on the west side of Yankee Jim Canyon north of Yellowstone National Park, rock work along US 12 southwest of Avon, and on Montana Highway 43 west of Divide are still visible to today's motorists and are testimonials to convict labor.



Convicts building a road on the east shore of Flathead Lake in 1913.

MDT's mission is to serve the public by providing a transportation system and services that emphasize quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality, and sensitivity to the environment.

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MDT Wants Your Comments

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans_comm/proposed_proj.pdf, or give us a call at 1-800-714-7296. You can mail comments on proposed projects to MDT at the following address or e-mail them to mdtnewprojects@mt.gov.

MDT Project Analysis Manager
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Contact Information

Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call 800-714-7296 (in Montana only) or 406-444-3423. The TTY number is 406-444-7696 or 800-335-7592.

Administrator (Lynn Zanto).....	444-3445
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MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information, call (406)444-3423, TTY (800)335-7592, or the Montana Relay at 711.